phenomenon of global warming is alarming and it is a matter of grave concern. I would like to know the hon. Minister the reason for the decrease in the forest cover and the steps being taken to reverse this situation from a decrease in the forest cover to an increase in the forest cover.

SHRI S. REGUPATHY: Sir, I have already mentioned the reasons for decline in our forest cover. One of them was the destruction caused by Tsunami in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, submergence of forest land due to construction of dams in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, shifting cultivation and bamboo flowering in the North East, especially in Nagaland and Manipur. These are the major reasons for a decline in the forest cover by about 728 sq. kilometres.

*443. [The questioner (SHRI A. ELAVARASAN) was absent. For answer *vide* page 20 infra.]

Irrigation project of lower Painganga in Maharashtra

*444. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that around 95 villages, including 45 tribal villages and approximately 1100 acres of forest land, is being affected and 2 lakh trees are to be cut down due to the proposed irrigation project of lower Painganga in Maharashtra;

(b) whether any alternative non-displacing schemes for irrigation have been identified;

(c) whether the Ministry has given clearance for the said project; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (d) The State Government of Maharashtra had submitted a proposal for diversion of 1089.06 ha of reserve forest land for submergence and Canal for Lower Painganga Major Irrigation Project in Yavatmal, Nanded and Chandrapur districts of Maharashtra. The felling of trees in this forest area was restricted to FRL-4 mts involving 1,39,588 trees. The project involves displacement of 7,102 families in 46 villages.

The requirement of forest land for the purpose was, however, reduced to 998.10 ha involving 1,32,998 trees to be felled at FRL-4 mts.

The Ministry of Environment and Forests have not received any alternative non displacing scheme for Irrigation from the State Government of Maharashtra. The project submitted by them as referred to in first paragraph is under consideration.

श्रीमती वृंदा कारत: सर, जो Lower Painganga Major Irrigation Project है, जैसे मंत्री जी के जवाब में बताया गया है, महाराष्ट्र के तीन जिले इससे प्रभावित होते हैं। मेरा पहला सप्लीमेंटरी मिनिस्टर साहब के इस जवाब के साथ संबंध रखता है जिसमें उन्होंने लिखा है कि अभी तक उनके पास कोई ऑल्टरनेटिव नॉन डिसप्लेसिंग प्रोजेक्ट नहीं आया है। सर, अभी मैं उस इलाके में गयी थी और वहां पर सब लोगों से मिली थी। हकीकत यह है कि वहां के लोगों ने और खुद सरकार के कुछ महत्वपूर्ण सीनियर्स इंजिनियर्स ने एक ऑल्टरनेटिव प्रोजैक्ट दिया है जो बैराज बेस्ड है, जिससे विस्थापितों की संख्या बिल्कुल होगी ही नहीं। और इरिगेशन और पॉवर की जो जरूरत है वह भी पूरी होगी, सर, मैं यह भी कहना चाहूंगी कि इस समय ...(व्यवधान)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would you put the question, please?

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Yes, Sir, I am asking the question. It is linked to that. एक अभी कानून का प्रस्ताव पेश किया है, जिसमें लिखा है कि जहां नॉन डिस्प्लेसिंग आल्टरनेटिव्ज हैं, वह नॉन डिस्प्लेसिंग आल्टरनेटिव्ज को पहले स्टडी करना चाहिए। नॉन डिस्प्लेसिंग आल्टरनेटिव्ज हैं, लेकिन केन्द्र सरकार के पास महाराष्ट्र सरकार ने उस नॉन डिस्प्लेसिंग आल्टरनेटिव्ज को अभी तक पेश ही नहीं किया है। ऐसी स्थिति में क्या रास्ता हो सकता है? इसलिए मैं मंत्री जी से यह पूछना चाहूंगी कि इस स्थिति में क्या मंत्री जी खुद एक कमेटी का गठन करेंगे, जिस कमेटी में वहां के एक्सपर्ट और वहां के लोगों को जोड़कर जो नॉन डिस्प्लेसिंग आल्टरनेटिव्ज हैं, उसके ऊपर टाइम फ्रेम वर्क में कार्य करेंगे, यह मैं पूछना चाहती हूं?

SHRI S. REGUPATHY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Ministry of Environment and Forests has received a proposal from the Government of Maharashtra for the Lower Painganga Major Irrigation Project in three districts of Maharashtra. Under the Forests (Conservation) Act, the necessary steps have to be taken. The matter is under consideration, and no decision has yet been taken.

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Sir, I think there is a language communication gap here. I know what it said; I know what the project is. I have asked the Minister a question, which I will repeat as my supplementary. My second supplementary is—I am afraid, Sir, you are not directing the Minister to give an answer to my question—since the Maharashtra Government has failed to put forward the non-displacing alternative, which is there, before the Central Government, will the Ministry of Environment and Forests of the Central Government set up a Committee with representatives of the experts of that area plus the representatives of the State Government plus the representatives of the people who are to be displaced and look into this non-displacing alternative which has been suggested in the draft proposal of the Act which is before the Parliament?

डॉ॰ कर्ण सिंह: वे कहते हैं मिल गया है।

श्रीमती वृंदा कारत: नहीं मिला है, वे बोल रहे हैं।

SHRI S. REGUPATHY: Sir, for non-forest purpose, the forest land can be diverted only under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. So, we are receiving proposals only under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. In that Act, whatever things have been mentioned, we have taken those steps. For constituting a Committee or anything, that has to be within the Forest (Conservation) Act. It is not a prohibitory, it is only mandatory.

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Sir, I again say ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please, let him finish ...(*Interruptions*)... Please, let him finish.

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: How can I? Sir, please understand. I am asking a question which is under his ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI S. REGUPATHY: Sir, the hon. Member is asking for ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: One person at a time, please,

DR. KARAN SINGH: Have you received the proposal?....(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI S. REGUPATHY: Yes, we are receiving proposals, but we have not received the alternative proposal. ....(*Interruptions*)... Sir, we have received the proposal from the Government of Maharashtra. It is under consideration.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that the answer?

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Sir, I could not hear what all he said.

SHRI S. REGUPATHY: We have received the proposal from the Government of Maharashtra. The hon. Member is mentioning about the constitution of a separate committee. Under the Forest (Conservation) Act, we can divert land only for non-forest purpose. ....(*Interruptions*)... The Forest Advisory Committee is there.

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Mr. Minister, may I please inform you about the authority you have as a Minister? You have the authority to constitute a committee to look into the various alternatives. Are you prepared to set up such a committee? You or No.

SHRI S. REGUPATHY: Sir, already the Forest Advisory Committee is there. ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: No discussions here, please.

SHRI S. REGUPATHY: Then, every subject has to be sent to the Central Empowered Committee constituted by the Supreme Court of India also. So, we have not taken any *suo motu* decision. First, it has to be placed before the FAC, and then it has to go to the CEC. You know it very well. The Central Empowered Committee is there. It has been constituted by the hon. Supreme Court. So, we have to send the proposal to the CEC. ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, Question No. 445. ...(*Interruptions*)...

श्री अमर सिंह: सर, हम बहुत संयत होकर शालीनता के साथ बैठे हुए हैं। लेकिन अगर आप आंसर नहीं देंगे, तो मैं सदन में अपने सदस्यों का नेता होने के नाते, वृंदा कारत जी के प्रश्न के इंतजार में बैठा हुआ था। ये न तो हमारे प्रश्न का उत्तर देते हैं और न वामपंथी साथियों के प्रश्न का उत्तर देते हैं.....(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री सभापति: देखिए, ...(**व्यवधान**)... देखिए, अमर सिंह जी। ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री अमर सिंह: हम यहां सदन में किसलिए आये हैं? सदन में हमारा दायित्व क्या है?...(**व्यवधान**).. प्रधान मंत्री जी यहां पर बैठे हुए हैं। ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री सभापति: अमर सिंह जी, एक मिनट, बात सुन लीजिए। ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री अमर सिंह: एक ऐसा मंत्री जिसकों न भाषा का ज्ञान है, न विषय का ज्ञान है। ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री सभापति: प्लीज, आप ...(**व्यवधान**)...

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Sir, I am sorry he is ...(*Interruptions*).....

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Sir, they cannot force the Minister like this. ...(*Interruptions*)...(*Interruptions*)... They want him to say what they want. ....(*Interruptions*)....(*Interruptions*)... This cannot be accepted. ....(*Interruptions*)...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please resume your seats. ...(*Interruptions*)...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: He cannot say like this. ...(*Interruptions*)... (*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 445. ...(*Interruptions*)...(*Interruptions*)... Question No. 446, ...(*Interruptions*)...(*Interruptions*)...

Question No. 447...(*Interruptions*)....(*Interruptions*)... Question No. 448...(*Interruptions*)...(*Interruptions*)...Let the question be put. ...(*Interruptions*)...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Sir, we want your ruling. ... (*Interruptions*) ... (*Interruptions*) ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: None of this will go on record.

...(*Interruptions*)...(*Interruptions*)... Question No. 448.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN:*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing is going on record....(*Interruptions*)...(*Interruptions*)... None of that is going on record. ...(*Interruptions*)...(*Interruptions*)... Please resume your places. ...(*Interruptions*)...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN:*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing will go on record. ...(*Interruptions*)...(*Interruptions*)... Please resume you places. ...(*Interruptions*)...(*Interruptions*)... Hon. Members, kindly resume you places. ...(*Interruptions*)...(*Interruptions*)... Nothing has gone on record, that is it. ...(*Interruptions*)...(*Interruptions*)... Nothing has gone on record.

...(*Interruptions*)...(*Interruptions*)...

*445. [The questioner(s) (Shri Ram Jethmalani and Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi) were absent. For answer *vide* page 21.]

*446. [The questioner (Shri Kanjibhai Patel) was absent. For answer *vide* page 22.]

*447. [The questioner (Dr. K. Malaisamy) was absent. For answer *vide* page 23.]

Access Deficit Charges earned by BSNL

*448. SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the qauntum of Access Deficit Charges earned by BSNL during the years 2001-02 to 2007-08, year-wise; and

(b) whether it is a fact that the access deficit charges, so earned were being used by BSNL for providing and maintaining telephonic services to rural and remote areas?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) and (b) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The Access Deficit Charges (ADC) regime came into existence with effect from 1st May, 2003. The quantum of ADC earned by BSNL after its provisioning by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India is given below:

Period		Amount
From	To	(Rs. in crores)
01.05.2003	31.01.2004	7851
01.02.2004	31.01.2005	4559
01.02.2005	28.02.2006	4584
01.03.2006	31.03.2007	2760
01.04.2007	31.03.2008	1900

* Not recorded.